

## Captain Kidd

(C. 1645-1701)

William Kidd was a British privateer who later became a pirate. He was born in Greenock, Scotland, about 1645. Captain Kidd is one of the most famous of all pirates. The legend of his vast hidden treasure is also one of the most famous buried treasure stories in history. Robert Louis Stevenson's famous pirate novel, *Treasure Island*, is not a biography of Kidd, but Stevenson patterned his novel after Kidd's life.



We know little about Kidd's early life, but by 1690 he was a ship owner in New York.

He served England's King William III against French privateers in the West Indies. In 1696 sailors recommended Kidd to the Earl of Bellomont to help rid the waters of pirates. Bellomont was the British governor of the territory that is now Massachusetts and New York. Kidd received two royal commissions giving him permission to attack French as well as pirate ships.

Kidd and his men sailed from Plymouth, England, to New York for additional men and supplies. They then sailed to Madagascar and the eastern coast of Africa.

Because they were not successful enough capturing either French or pirate ships, his men threatened to mutiny. Kidd had an argument with a gunner named William Moore. When Moore insisted they become pirates and attack a Dutch ship, Kidd became enraged, called him a dog, and hit Moore over the head with a bucket. Moore died of the injury the next day. The crew continued to threaten to mutiny. Finally, in desperation, Kidd turned to piracy and began attacking ships of any nation.

Their greatest success was capturing a Moorish ship named the *Queda Merchant*. Kidd sold most of its cargo for over 10,000 English pounds. This was a huge fortune in those days.

After this, the East India Company, England's major trading company, insisted on his arrest since his actions hurt their world trade. The English now declared that Kidd was a pirate.

Kidd returned to America in 1698. He then sailed to Boston to proclaim his innocence. Officials tricked Kidd into going ashore to get a pardon, but instead, they arrested him. Kidd assumed Lord Bellomont would help him keep his freedom. Bellomont refused, and officials then shipped Kidd to London.

Authorities imprisoned Kidd for two years in the notorious Newgate prison. Finally, authorities took him to the Old Bailey. The Old Bailey was London's most famous criminal court. There they tried Kidd and found him guilty of piracy and murder. He wrote to the Speaker of England's House of Commons and promised to reveal the whereabouts of his treasure if they would spare his life. The speaker refused to make a deal. Ever since Kidd tried to make this deal, the legend of his vast buried treasure continues.

Officials hanged Kidd on May 23, 1701. They then dipped the body in tar to preserve it. Then they chained the body to the bank of the Thames River. It remained there for several years as a warning to others of the punishment for piracy.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions for Consideration**

1. Where was William Kidd born?

---

2. What is the title of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous novel about pirates?

---

3. In what city was Kidd a ship owner by 1690?

---

4. Which English king did Kidd serve against French privateers?

---

5. Who was the British governor of the territory that is now Massachusetts and New York?

---

6. What happened to William Moore?

---

---

7. What was the *Queda Merchant*?

---

---

8. What was the name of England's major trading company?

---

9. In what U. S. city was Kidd arrested?

---

10. What famous prison held Kidd for two years?

---

11. How and when did Kidd die?

---

---

12. What happened to Kidd's body after his death? Why was this done?

---

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary**

The following is a list of words used in the story of Captain Kidd. Look each of them up in a dictionary and copy the meaning on this sheet. After the meaning, write a sentence using the word appropriately.

1. commission: \_\_\_\_\_

2. enraged: \_\_\_\_\_

3. legend: \_\_\_\_\_

4. mutiny: \_\_\_\_\_

5. notorious: \_\_\_\_\_

6. novel (a type of book): \_\_\_\_\_

7. pardon: \_\_\_\_\_

8. pirate: \_\_\_\_\_

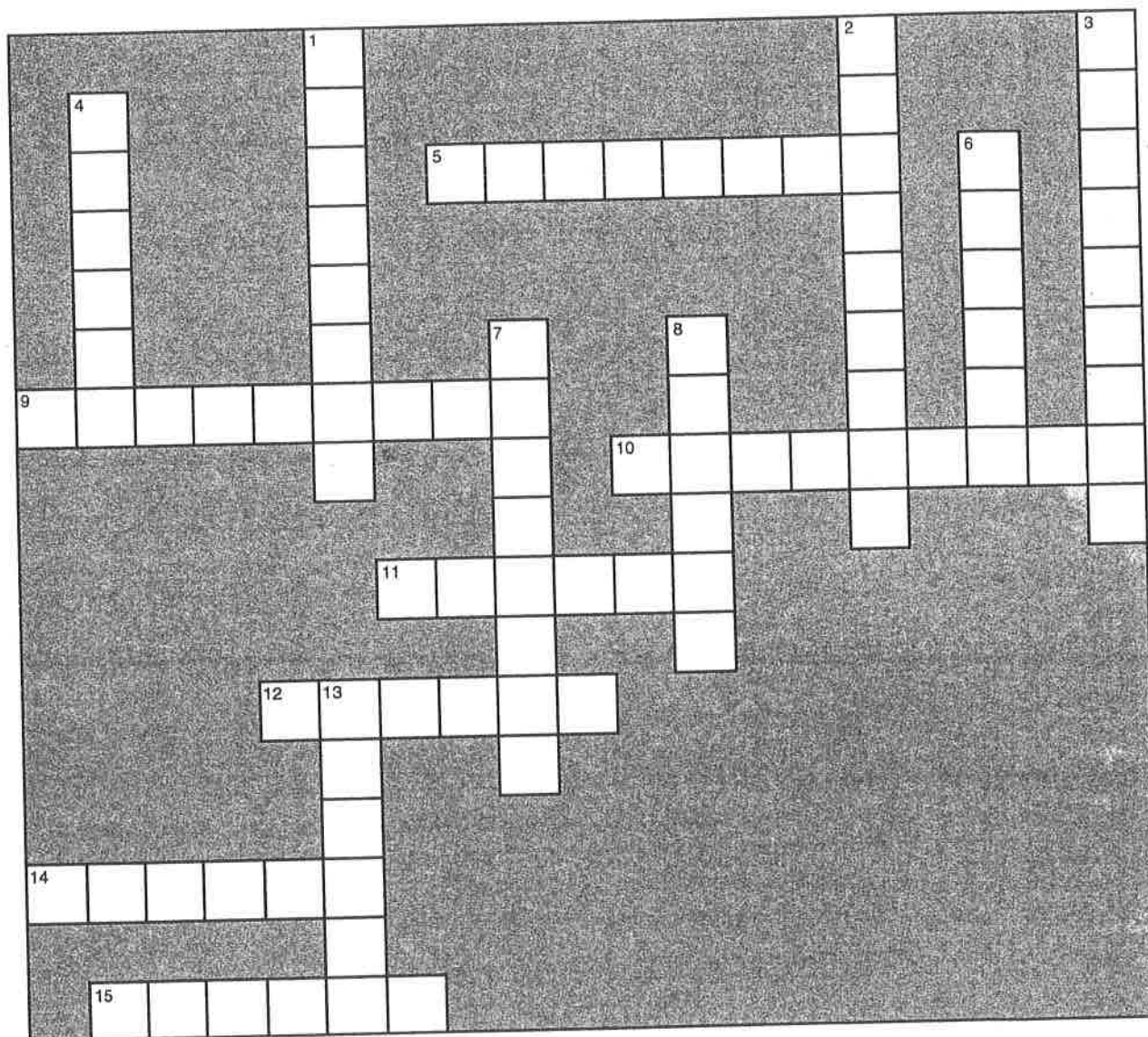
9. privateer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. proclaim: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Crossword Puzzle**

Use the clues below to complete the puzzle. You can find the answers in the narrative about Captain Kidd.

**ACROSS**

5. The country of Kidd's birth
9. Kidd was both a pirate and this.
10. Last name of the author of Treasure Island
11. City where Kidd was imprisoned and tried
12. Madagascar is off the eastern coast of this continent.
14. City where Kidd was arrested
15. Kidd was found guilty of piracy and this crime.

**DOWN**

1. English city from which Kidd sailed
2. England's famous criminal court (two words)
3. The governor of what is now Massachusetts
4. William Moore's job on Kidd's ship
6. River that flows through England and past London
7. City of Kidd's birth
8. What Kidd's crew threatened to do when they did not capture any French ships
13. Kidd fought against privateers from this country.